



# **Electronic Voting Process and Available Technology for Council and Council Bodies**



## Council Motion – October 2021

Motion: Request staff provide a review of electronic voting options for Council functions.

Motion carried with no opposition.

# Other Fishery Management Councils

- No formal electronic voting policies or procedures added
- Hand raising feature in webinars
- For remote meetings or when electing officers
  - Survey Monkey
  - Election Runner – online voting platform

# Features of Meridia Electronic Voting System

- Works for hybrid meetings (virtual and on-site members) - uses internet connection for remote participants, secure radio signal in room
  - On-site member includes a Yes/No clicker
  - Virtual member Access through web app
- Designed for the U.S. House of Representatives
  - Used by local, state, and private organizations
- Flexible display and tabulation options
  - Can display names “roll call” and votes or just tabulation of “final votes”





## Anticipated Pros

- Low price entry point
- Reduces errors/time in tabulation
- Improves transparency

## Anticipated Cons

- Learning Curve
- Will require a test period
- May require updates to Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures (SOPPs)

# Council questions/considerations:

- If the Council wants to pursue electronic voting, how would the Council like to use this system?
  - For a vote on every motion or only roll call votes?
  - Use in committees and full Council?
  - Use it for other Council bodies such as SSC or AP votes?
- Would the votes on “final action” need to be read into the record by Chair or Executive Director?

# Excerpted from Council SOPPs

## **3.0 Council Meetings**

The Council will meet at the call of the Council Chair or upon request of a majority of its voting members. Meetings will ordinarily be held in plenary sessions, but may be in subgroups or in individual sessions.

The presiding officer at any Council meeting will be the Council Chair, Council Vice Chair, or in their absences, a member of the Council elected by the voting members present to serve as temporary Chair.

The Council prefers in-person meetings with the ability to freely discuss and exchange information and interact with the public. However, health, budgetary, and/or time constraints may require virtual participation of a Council member when an in-person Council meeting is held. Therefore, Council members must be physically present at Council meetings in order to present a motion or vote, unless approved to do so remotely by a majority decision of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Executive Director.

All participants are to keep electronic devices on silent or vibrating mode during Council meetings.

### **3.2.2 Quorum and Roll Call Voting**

A majority of voting members constitutes a quorum (MSA § 302(e)(1)).

Decisions of the Council are by majority vote of the voting members present and voting (except for proposed removal of Council members which requires an affirmative vote by two-thirds of the members). An abstention does not affect the unanimity of a vote.

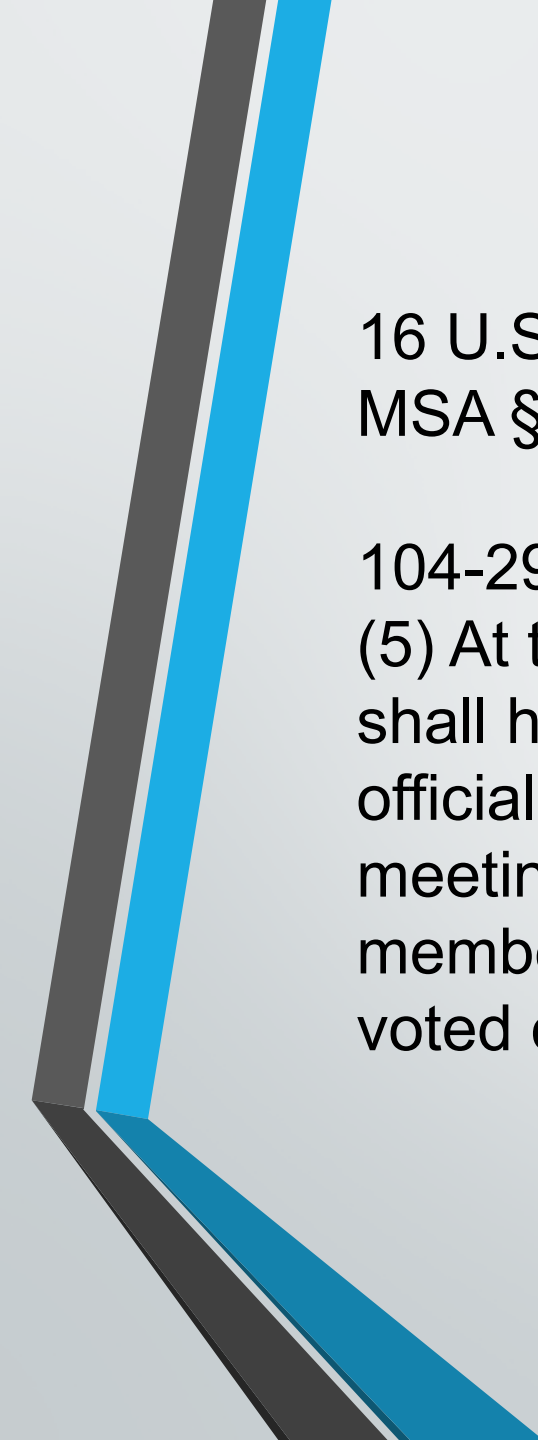
A roll call vote will be held on any motion before the Council at the request of any voting member. Votes for the approval of management plans or plan amendments and other roll call votes are recorded by name of Council member and how they voted. A vote may not be taken until the motion before the Council is recorded in written form visible to each Council member and the public present.

### **3.2.2 Quorum and Roll Call Voting continued**

Decisions by consensus are permitted except where the issue is Council approval of a/an:

- (a) FMP;
- (b) Amendment to a FMP;
- (c) Proposed regulation;
- (d) Secretarial FMP or amendment; and
- (e) Council finding that an emergency exists involving any fishery.


[https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Gulf-Council-SOPPs\\_August-2021.pdf](https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Gulf-Council-SOPPs_August-2021.pdf)



16 U.S.C. 1852  
MSA § 302

104-297

(5) At the request of any voting member of a Council, the Council shall hold a roll call vote on any matter before the Council. The official minutes and other appropriate records of any Council meeting shall identify all roll call votes held, the name of each voting member present during each roll call vote, and how each member voted on each roll call vote.



## Questions and Next Steps